

not there. It is a file cabinet with IOUs in it.

Fact number three, there is no easy fix. I just heard one so-called solution that we simply lift the earnings cap so people like Bill Gates who make millions of dollars every year would pay more than just Social Security on the first \$90,000 of income. That sounds good; but upon review, if we included all of the millionaires and others making more than \$90,000 a year, we asked the actuaries what it would do, and it would postpone insolvency just 6 years. So we are just talking on the margins.

Raising the payroll tax, we have done that since the 1930s 19 times. We simply cannot continue to go down that road. I would like to hear somebody seriously propose that. What do we set it at? How much more do we want to tax people?

We have to harness the power of compound interest. We need a new model. That is what the President is proposing. I think it was Albert Einstein who said the most powerful force in the universe is that of compound interest. We have to allow individuals to harness that.

I commend the President for taking the position he has taken. The difference between being a leader and a follower is when you are a leader, you recognize that the people may not be with you and you may need to persuade them and convince them and go out and tell them there is a problem.

There are formidable foes out there, the AARP and others, who will put out information and say there is no problem, there is a trust fund somehow and we do not have to deal with this issue for another 40 years or so. So there is a lot of educating that has to be done. That is what a leader does. A follower says that is where the people are, I do not have to convince them, I just have to join them, and we will just heckle and boo anybody who proposes a solution. That is not leadership, and I am glad the President is actually leading on this, and I commend my colleagues for leading on it as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue. There is no more serious debate that we will have in this coming decade domestically than how to deal with this issue. How do we give individuals the freedom to be more secure in their own retirement. I tend to believe that in the end if you present Americans out there two politicians, one who will stand and say, yes, there is a problem, we need a fix, and the other who will say there is no problem, there is a trust fund somewhere that will fix it, I think in the end Americans will believe the politician who fesses up to the fact that there is a problem. Demographics do not lie, and we have to deal with it in the future. I commend the President and those moving towards a real solution and who are presenting actual proposals that will move us in the direction we need to go.

#### CONFISCATED PROPERTY IN ETHIOPIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing a bill today concerning the Ethiopian Government's confiscation of property owned by U.S. citizens and the Ethiopian Government's arrogance and intransigence in the face of efforts to rectify the situation.

Mr. Speaker, the Berhane family are constituents and friends. They are black African immigrants who fled the establishment of a communist regime in Ethiopia in the 1970s. They now live in Huntington Beach, California. At one time the Berhane family owned the National Alcohol and Liquor Factory, NALF, in the capital of Ethiopia. The Marxist regime that took over Ethiopia expropriated their property and drove the Berhane family into exile. Well, that Marxist government fell more than a decade ago.

The current government agreed in principle to return all illegally expropriated property, but it has steadfastly refused to return the Berhane family's factory, or offer them just compensation. It seems the distillery is one of the confiscated properties that the heavy-handed rulers of Ethiopia refuse to return to its rightful owners. Perhaps that is because this factory is one of the few businesses that makes a profit. The smell of corruption at the highest levels of the Ethiopian Government is hard to miss.

Mr. Speaker, this matter should have been settled long ago. This property should have been returned to the Berhane family or just compensation should have been offered. The Berhane family claim is supported by a finding of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which is part of the United States Government. So this is not a matter of determining whether or not the Berhane family has a just claim; it is a matter of arrogance and probably corruption on the part of the Ethiopian hierarchy.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation today that will prevent Ethiopia from receiving any benefit from U.S. Government sources until it deals honestly and fairly with the claim of these American citizens. It is a tragedy that the Ethiopian Government is risking the well-being of its people because of its intransigence in dealing with a just claim of an American family.

Mr. Speaker, this act withholds all appropriated U.S. Federal dollars to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia until property claims of American citizens are either returned or the U.S. citizens are justly compensated. With the exception of emergency humanitarian aid, this prohibition on funding includes economic support funds, the Export-Import Bank,

foreign military financing, the Global AIDS Initiative, Millennium Challenge Account, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. This bill further directs international organizations to be required to oppose aid to Ethiopia under these same conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this type of officially sanctioned rip-off that we see in Ethiopia is outrageous. However, it is not just limited to the gang that rules Ethiopia.

□ 2045

Mr. Speaker, there are other governments, be they Cuba or Iran, that are equally guilty of this type of theft. I intend to introduce similar legislation in a broader bill denying aid to all of these foreign governments who deny the proper reimbursement to American citizens who have just property claims against them. Part of that bill, which will include Ethiopia as well, will provide that U.S. citizens with legitimate claims against a government like that in Ethiopia will be able to put a legal hold on the American property and assets owned by the government officials of that government.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to stand up for justice, especially for the justice of American citizens. These African immigrants who came here fleeing communism had their property confiscated. The government of Ethiopia has time and again suggested that they would return all property that was illegally confiscated. Yet the Berhane family has not had its property returned. They deserve the rights of protection of the United States Government.

We will struggle for this legislation, we will pass this legislation, we will keep this fight up until this family gets justice, this family gets their property returned or gets just compensation.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 5. Concurrent resolution providing for the acceptance of a statue of Sarah Winnemucca, presented by the people of Nevada, for placement in National Statuary Hall, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 63. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.